

Education:
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AN  
ADDRESS  
DELIVERED BEFORE  
THE LINNÆAN ASSOCIATION  
OF  
PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE,  
GETTYSBURG, APRIL 18TH, 1853.

BY A. WEBSTER, D.D.  
Of Baltimore, Md.

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GETTYSBURG:
PRINTED BY H. C. NEINSTEDT.
1853.

1893

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL.

DEPARTMENT OF

CLASSICAL STUDIES

LEAZERLYN COLLEGE

THE GYMNASIUM ASSOCIATION

DEPARTMENT OF

ADDRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.

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ADDRESS

RECEIVED

THE LINNEAN ASSOCIATION

ON

KENNESAW COLLEGE

GETTYSBURG, APRIL 18TH 1883

BY A. WHESTER, JR.
OF NEW YORK, N.Y.

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GETTYSBURG

PRINTED BY H. C. WINTERSTADT.

1883

*Pennsylvania College,
April 18th, 1853.*

DEAR SIR:

The Linnæan Association of Pennsylvania College acknowledges its indebtedness to you for the acceptable address you, this evening, kindly delivered and has authorized me to request the manuscript for publication.

With sincere regard,

Your friend,

M. L. STOEVER,
Pres. Linn. Ass.

REV. DR. WEBSTER.

Gettysburg, April 19th, 1853.

DEAR SIR:

The manuscript, referred to in your kind note, is at your disposal.

Very truly yours, &c.,

A. WEBSTER.

PROFESSOR STOEVER.

Philadelphia, April 18th 1893.

Dear Sir,
The American Association of University Professors has received from you for its records a copy of the manuscript of the paper which you delivered and has authorized me to request the manuscript for their files.

With sincere regards,
Yours truly,
W. L. STEVENS.

W. L. STEVENS,
President.

Very truly yours,
A. WEBSTER.

Philadelphia, April 18th 1893.

Dear Sir,
The manuscript referred to in your kind note is at your disposal for such use as you may desire.

A. WEBSTER.

Very truly yours,
A. WEBSTER.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Linnaean Association ;

Gentlemen of the Faculty ;

Gentlemen and Ladies of the Auditory :

THE subject to come before us is, "One of the phases of Education :—" and I trust that it will not appear immodest in me, to have brought any such question, for your consideration, into a presence like this, where I expected, of course, to see those, whose wisdom and experience in Education are so extensively known.

As to the particular phase of the subject to be exhibited, I shall not now, be very explicit. My moon is yet below the horizon ; you must be contented, if you please, with a kind of *crepuscular* light, for awhile, and at her rising, you will at once see for yourselves. Of course, you will not expect *sun-light* ; only a mild and gentle radiance is possible to my humble orb. Yet I will try to have her shine from a clear sky, hoping to keep away all clouds, from before her modest disc, and shall expect you to prevent, if you can, all dreamy exhalations, down there, from rising and spreading over those rich mental valleys, where I would have my moonbeams to gleam, and mingle with the flowers of your thoughts.

Education is a *work*. Let us look at the condition of the materials, with which the task is to be performed. I do not mean the tools, the instrumentalities ; but the materials.

Accustomed, for years, to look at objects by the lights of Revelation, History and facts ; I have no very high opinion of the condition of Humanity. Its constitution is beyond all praise, but its condition is worthy of all possible censure.

The idea prevails, that this present, is *the* age of progress : and that the *old foggy* people and notions are to be pushed off, out of sight, by the sprightly, active, *dare-every-thing* Young Spirit of the day. Hence, we have Young England —Young Ireland—Young America, and, within the realm of Theology, Young Humanity. I leave all these *young bloods* to the politicians, except the last. With him I will hold controversy, and charge him with the same base condition, as that proved against *Old* Humanity. I am no more the admirer of the one, than of the other, and have capital offences to allege against them both.

In uttering such sentiments, I am aware that I run full against that pride, which is so natural to us all. There is nothing to which we are more prone, than pride. It grows in and spreads through our hearts, like certain ill weeds, which mock the complaints and toils of the farmer, who labors in vain to exterminate them from his fields. And yet, in the whole universe, there is nothing more ridiculous, than a proud man ; for in that universe, there is no other being so needy and dependent, so encompassed with frightful perils.

Observe the condition of his infancy. Is there any known being so dependent ? He is without instinct ; and has, as yet, no use of his reason. He cannot obtain a particle of nourishment, nor even change his position, without aid. Unassisted, a few hours would terminate his feeble, helpless existence. He is not to be compared with the young animal of any other species. The colt, the calf, the very puppy, all outstrip him ; in the fact, that not one of these is so dependent. The colt kicks up his heels, in his wild sports ; and runs his mimic race, before the infant knows that *he has* any heels to kick or run *with*. The puppy acts the sentinel at the door, and threatens the stranger with his teeth, before such an idea as door or stranger has entered the infant's head ; and before the careful nurse has let go the infant's hand, that same puppy is hunting game in the field, running the fox into his burrow, or playing the dog in some other way, for the amusement or profit of his master.

It might be thought—were we to think as superficially as multitudes do—that, although man, in his infancy, is so dependent, yet, with every succeeding year, he would advance toward *in-dependence*, and that this would begin to be quite evident, in the season of his youth.

But, how far from this is the case? It is clear that his wants have now multiplied most rapidly. He needs more food, more clothing, more help in his education. The simple food of his infancy, as also his apparel, playthings, books, every thing, must be on a larger scale of quality and expense, and all these must be supplied to him—he cannot obtain them for himself. Every year, his need and his perils increase, and though he may put on airs, and imagine himself *less* dependent, he is really more so, and feels within him the cravings of a nature, that urges him into society, as though it were not only essential to his comfort, but to his very existence.

Time flies. He is a man. His nature is matured. He needs a wife, a home, and some openings of business; and, no matter how proud he is, he depends upon the smile of his lady-love so entirely, that, to take his own word for it, it is impossible for him ever to be happy without it; and indeed, it may be, that not only will such bitter despair fix him, “like patience *on* a monument,” but will soon, alas, put him under one; to be visited and sighed at by all who have hearts to feel for an unhappy lover, shot to death by the unkind glances of two black eyes! However, he does not die, as he expected; and,—after awhile—and, perhaps, not a *very* great while, he finds some kinder fair, who does smile; and after the usual extraordinary occurrences, of finding out, that he never did love till now, the writing of beautiful epistles, glowing with love and the choicest adjectives, he steps into the participle of the perfect—he is married.

In the meantime, he has been attentive to the *material*: for although his heart assured him, that to possess the hand of his divine Angelina, was all that was necessary, to make him happy, common sense, and other good advisers, who, perhaps, had some experience in the case, assured him that the *where-*

moon, and stars, to supply his countless and urgent necessities. In fact, should our hero fall in with one of the bones of Don Quixote's horse, I am not sure but that he ought to take off his hat, and bow as low as the candidate does to a suffragan : for he needs even that old bone, to make a little more wheat, to make a little more bread, to put a little more flesh upon his own bones, which are equal to any horse-leeches, or even to the beggars of happy Italy, in their cries for perpetual contributions.

Age comes on. And now that he is grown old and feeble, his dependence is the only thing, that does not wear out. His wife dies ; his children leave home and set up for themselves ; his limbs fail ; so his teeth, his ears, his eyes. Poor old man ! he is the very personification of dependence. He gasps ; he dies ; who shall bury him ? He cannot crawl into his grave. Some one must make him a shroud ; some one a coffin ; must dig him a grave, put him down into it, and cover him up ; put a stone there, to keep his memory alive awhile. He is dependent to the last ; and when society turns its ear from his plea, both his name and memory perish !

Why, then, should man be proud ? Pride is indicative of a feeble mind, or of gross carelessness of inquiry into the facts of human condition. That condition is marred, humiliating, base. Man is undergoing a punitive process. He is in a penitentiary. Pardon and extrication are the summit of his just hopes.

To represent the earth as a Lunatic Asylum, and ourselves as lunatics, would be gross flattery. We are not unfortunate, but wicked. We are offenders against the wisest, the best of all laws, and are convicts ; justly condemned for our crimes.

But, even aside from this. Is a man proud of his personal beauty, his great strength, his excellent constitution ? Pray, what merit does *he* derive from all that ? Is he his own Creator ? Is he proud of the high character of his intellect ?—And, indeed, did he construct it thus, that he arrogates to himself the praise ? What has he, that was not given unto him ?

All his possessions are the alms of heaven ; or the mean wages he has earned in the base drudgery of Satan.

I freely admit, that a proper observation discloses the fact, that man's position was designed to excel that of any other terrestrial being. Holy Scripture assures us of this. When the earth had been arranged, and the other orders of animals created, then man was brought in, to have dominion over all ; as the vicegerent of God ; as the divinely appointed monarch of this terrene province.

Ovid, the best and the worst of the Latin poets, as I think, intermixing heathen mythology with the Mosaic history, displays this point of human superiority and sovereignty :

*Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius unum,
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.
Natus homo est.
* * * in effigiem moderantum cuncta Deorum :
Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque videre
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

But, the glory has departed. Somehow, man has descended from his original grandeur, and is now a frail being, in the midst of numerous and alarming perils ; his body so susceptible of the diseases which are ever lurking near, concealed in sunshine and vapor, heat and cold, in his food and drink, at home, abroad, in the academy, in the college, in his shop, in his counting-room, in his office, in the senate chamber, in the very temple where he worships ; his mind alike susceptible of errors, as numerous and as insidious as the diseases referred to, and which errors watch for him everywhere, to injure his intellect, pollute his heart, and disgrace his life ; while death ever pursues him with his brandished dart, the grave ever yawning in his path, and hell ever longing for his utter destruction.

To be sure, other animals are in danger. The hawk swoops upon the poor partridge, and the victim perishes. But, then, its sufferings terminate. Not so, when vice swoops upon man ; that wretched victim finds no relief from death ; the talons

still clutch into the writhing soul, and the cruel beak tears among its nerves forever!

The mystery is great. It can only be explained upon the hypothesis, that "the glory has departed!" ICHABOD! ICHABOD! That is the true doctrine.

Frail, mortal, erring, dying man, cannot be the original design of God. It is absurd, to suppose that the Creator would have produced the present state of things. Creation here—whatever it may be among the glorious, everlasting stars, moving in purity and silence along their solemn paths—is running down; everything tends downward; and though, all around us, we see the great struggle of nature to rise, and adorn herself with beauty and fragrance; her success, no matter how frequently the effort is renewed, is but for a season. Down, down to decay, corruption and dust, comes every fruit, every flower, every blossom, every bud, every leaf, every tree; and the very root dies and disappears.

Man, also, has come down, in common with the rest. What we see, are the traces of his pristine greatness; the sad indices of a mournful history. History is an old man, with a bald head, a long beard, without teeth, articulating badly, telling dry, prosy old stories, that put us to sleep, and we learn nothing. We awake, and amuse ourselves with things as they are. Is it not unaccountable, that the Ancients should have numbered this old fellow with the celestial nine, mistaking him for a gay and interesting lady? It is probable that they had no Eugene Sue, *et id omne*, in those days; and, so, for lack of something better, were glad to get their hands upon useful literature. Though, as I confess, there is reason to fear that Old Humanity had nothing to boast of in this particular. The very first words, in the Preface to Livy's History, give strong testimony against his cotemporaries, upon this very point: *Facturusne operæ pretium sim, si a primordio Urbis res populi Romani perscripserim, nec satis scio, nec, si sciam, dicere ausim. Quippe qui quum veterem tum vulgatum esse rem videam, dum novi semper scriptores aut in rebus certius aliquid allaturos se, aut scribendi arte rudem ve-*

rustatem superaturos credunt. It must be admitted, too, that his hints relative to what he regarded to be "ancient history," that written—*ante conditam condendamve urbem*—are not very complimentary to Clio herself: for while he styles those narratives—*decora*—he describes them as "poetic fables," rather than well authenticated *memorabilia*. It may be, that the divine Clio was about as fictitious a writer as the undivine Sue; as popular, and as worthless.

The soul, with its wonderful attributes, is encompassed with a body of corresponding faculties, to hold intercourse, through the material universe, with God. So, two human beings commune; each has his body, and yet soul communes with soul. Though I would not speak of the Deity, as being the Soul of the universe; He is more; He is the Creator and Upholder of all.

The structure of the body is so marvellous, that nothing is left for us to desire, but the consummation of its plan. What would we have substituted for its strong, but light and portable bony foundation? For its curiously contrived muscles, so conveniently overlaid, filled with such sensitive, but durable nerves, with such an efficient system of blood vessels, and all so well covered over, and so beautifully adorned? Such a provision for its sustenance, occasioning so much pleasure!—And, finally, such an adaptation of its capacity to the need of the true man within, the sentient, perceiving, thinking, choosing, willing soul; that it may well be the great model for the study of the architect and politician! Let the former put over our heads as convenient a house, and the latter furnish us with a similar body politic, and they will leave nothing, on our part, to be desired. The Sir Christopher Wrens, and Solons, will be forgotten.

Yes, the Creator's design was worthy of his glorious attributes, his love, wisdom, and power. "As for God," exclaims David, "his way is perfect." It was so, indeed, in his scheme of humanity. After the most rigorous scrutiny of the soul, and the body, their constituents and union, we see that all,

that is left us to desire, is, that the plan be in *perfect condition*, and in *perfect play*.

The soul was to be the Royal City of human nature, and every preparation was made for its being built up into a place worthy of the residence of God. Five great roads, the senses, were laid out, through the surrounding region, the body, along which the materials were to be brought with convenience, and in abundance; the most admirable plan was devised to keep the roads in thorough repair, and to provide supplies for the expeditious and faithful carriers, while artists of singular and even inspired skill received, arranged, and applied the varied materials to their appropriate use. What a glorious edification it would have been, had the magnificent scheme been accomplished!

It was frustrated. Neither the physical nor moral powers of man work out to a happy result. The body creaks and jerks, soon wears out, and is thrown aside, useless and ruined, into the grave. The soul is taken possession of by the powers of evil, is filled with confusion and uproar, and all its pomp and circumstance are succeeded by the utmost baseness and ruin.

One of the most marked and fearful proofs of the perverted condition of man, is the fact, that to give his nature the reins, is to destroy him. Those fiery coursers, the passions, rush madly away, like the steeds of the sun, with the inexperienced and incompetent Phæton;

*Nulloque inhibente, per auras
Ignota regionis eunt; quaque impetus egit,
Hac sine lege ruunt, altoque sub æthere fixis
Incursant stellis, rapiuntque per avia currum.*

The unhappy end of a sensualist is written in few words:

Voluitur in præceps!

Or, to vary the figure, the body soon resembles the Pontine Marshes, and the soul, like unhappy Rome, is stifled with the pestilential malaria. And, the worst of all is, the soul loves to have it so.

Turning our attention from the individual to society, we see the same unhappy tendency and result. No matter what ex-

cellences distinguish a young and rising nation, it soon gives sad evidence of some fatal defect. Intoxicated with success, it imagines itself invincible, while, at that very moment, foolish and treacherous selfishness and demagogueism are betraying its defences, and are about to offer it, an easy prey, to its enemies. As the men of the nations, one by one, fail, die, and sink into the silence and corruption of the grave, so, the nations themselves, one by one, pass away and are no more.

Decay is the general doom. In vain does each succeeding Spring cheer up the blighted grass, cover the destitute trees with green leaves, entice the blossoms forth, unfold and repaint the flowers. The Summer sun again fades and withers them all. Again the frosts of Autumn blacken them. The raging winds of Winter tear them all away as pitilessly as ever. What did they come forth for, but to perish?

The very mountains, those huge and seemingly eternal piles, with their bases so broad, and their craggy peaks so high! corrosion is at work even upon them; and though slowly, is surely crumbling them down, and will *level* them, at last, in the highway of that great destroyer, who, in his fearful triumph, is to tread down everything under heaven.

Thus universally the seeds of death have been strown!— Since the Creator looked with delight upon his works, and pronounced them all GOOD, what a direful change has occurred! There has been a woful departure from the original plan. God's wise will, with respect to the condition and working of his creatures, has been disobeyed, and the course of nature is wrong. He created nature in good condition; then rested from his direct, immediate, primary work, and looked on, as if to see himself glorified in the progress of the secondary causes which he had so wisely projected. So, Moses:—"And God saw (examined) everything he had made, and beheld, it was VERY GOOD!" Gen. 1: 31. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and

sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made." Gen. 2: 1, 2, 3. Or, rather, "which God had created to operate." אשר ברא אלהים לעשות. It is in conformity with this understanding of the passage, that Moses now immediately proceeds to narrate the operation of those secondary causes, and to describe to us the disastrous perversion of God's will.

The course of nature went wrong, and the curse of God came upon it, going into its most secret springs. That was a serious error of Cicero, when he wrote, in his beautiful, but sophistical treatise, *DE SENECTUTE*, "*Omnia vero, quæ secundum naturam fiunt, sunt habenda in bonis.*" De Senec., 46. It was scarcely necessary to enter and shiver among the damp shades of Stoicism, to work out this "lame and impotent conclusion." Yet it was with this preparation that he looked upon an old man, beyond the joys of youth, beyond the active employments of maturity, beyond the moment when

"The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon ;
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side ;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound."

And in survey of such a scene, could demand, "*Quid est — tam secundum naturam, quam senibus emori ?*" De Senec. 46. The answer is easy. It is furnished by the same melancholy *Jaques*. It is no more natural for an old man to die, than it is for the beautiful, bright-eyed, trusting, cherub-like infant, to pass on through the several ages of life, to that terrible condition in which both body and mind seem to fail, and the once gifted and glorious man is now little more than a clod in the process of being dissolved ; and presently it is but a clod in one of the streets of the city of life, and the scavenger sweeps it to the nearest pile, and carts it away.

Mr. Calhoun, the pure, great statesman of the south, wrought out a similar conclusion, even in this Christian country, and in this nineteenth century. He is said to have declared upon his

death-bed, "I desire nothing contrary to the constitution of nature." The language of Paul was: "We that are in this tabernacle (*the body*) do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." 2 Cor. 5:4. and he elsewhere speaks of death as an enemy, "the last enemy."

No wonder that he groaned. Nature is wrong. It is full of sin, and full of the curse of God. Made to live, it is dying. Made good, it is evil. "God cursed the earth for man's sake," and the curse was great. Wherever the *air* is, the curse is; wherever the *water* is, the curse is; wherever the *dry land* is, the curse is. The birds meet it in the highest air, the fish in the deepest sea, the beasts in the remotest isle, and man everywhere. It mingles with the perfume of Summer. It is an element in every fruit of Autumn. The beautiful fountain, gushing from the hill slope, and sparkling in the sunshine, is cursed, diffuses the *virus* among the grasses and flowers of its meadowy banks, and adds its tribute to the measureless curse of the bitter sea. The earth is dismal with it, freezing, burning, hardening, bursting, gashed with chasms, blighted with deserts, terrified with storms. For every storm is a memento of the curse. There was no storm while innocence and Eden remained. Then, "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Gen. 2:5, 6. The secondary causes, in their primitive condition, were competent to water the whole face of the ground, without rain or storm.

But, if this be true, that nature is wrong and cursed, then, what of the laws of nature, which all thinking men marvel at, and which infidelity would even deify? Why, we may well study, and profoundly admire them. They are replete with wisdom. Yet, as I have already hinted, they are but a penitentiary system. Not one of them can be violated with impunity, but, obedience to them all, would not extricate us from our prison. By such obedience, we would only escape prison punishment—the dread sentence, suspended over us, we could not escape.

Those laws are full of mercy, and give ample witness to the goodness, wisdom, and power of the Great Supreme.—Still, they confer no pardon. They merely make the well behaved prisoner as comfortable as prison discipline will allow, while they lash their transgressor as with a whip of scorpions, for the sins of his mind, and with disease and pain for the sins of his body.

As to the religion of nature, the Theology learned from the condition, laws and facts of nature, it is full of awe, and painfully unsatisfactory. Dread testimony is there, of the power and wisdom of God; but not one word of hope for the sinful and dying; not a whisper explanatory of the fearful secrets of the grave.

Even when aided by obscured traditions, strayed off from Revelation, and penetrating through the gloom of heathen mythology, Cicero could only go so far as to say, "*Si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam; lubenter erro: nec mihi hunc errem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.*" *De Senec.* 54. This is a dim torch, to light one through the thick and silent darkness of the grave; but it is more than Natural Theology, of itself, can bestow. She stands in the horrid cavern, with a sickly taper, and without the utterance of a single word, points to "a little gas floating in the air, a little salts diffused through the waters of the earth, and a handful of earthy matter, as being all that remains of the proud fabric of man."—*Dr. Good: Book of Nature.*

Gentlemen, through this twilight of my discourse, I have tried to fix your attention upon the terrific truth, that nature is *wrong* and *is cursed*. Now let my humble moon come up above this dreary horizon.

Is Education the Development of Human Nature? Are we to understand the term *literally*, and as signifying Education—the *leading out of the human powers*? If so, a complete education, under such circumstances, would be the greatest possible mischief to the subject of it, and, within the area of his influence, to society. *Human* nature is the worst kind of nature. No other is so malignant, artful, and deadly.

It is "enmity against God"—τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, ἔχθρα εἰς Θεόν. There is nothing in the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdom, so bad as that; no poison so virulent, no malice so deadly.—The Upas flourishes above the desert its exhalations have occasioned. But so terrible is the *virus* of human nature, that it involves *itself* in the destruction it causes. A triple headed viper, which with one head, hisses and strikes at heaven, with another, at society, with the other, at itself. What could be so horrible as the successful and complete development of such a nature?

Let us, then, understand the case, as an *in*-duction—the sowing of good seed—the pouring in of sweet and holy precepts, by a wise and diligent preceptor. The subject may seem to be *relieved* of its horrors. But the nature and condition of the soil are at the basis of the just hopes of the farmer. Why cast seed upon sands as sterile as Sahara? Upon the everlasting snow of the poles? Upon bare rocks? Among choking weeds? And why pour sweet and wholesome fluids into a vessel, whose substance and surface are deadly poison? He that drinks must die. There is as little hope connected with this theory, as with the other.

The first chapter of Romans, and the pages of Juvenal show, that the most horrible condition of society can co-exist with the highest condition of letters and science. "The devils *know*," yet are they devils still; the more terrible, because of their knowledge.

Gentlemen, society is writhing in most piteous, spasmodic action. The word *Reform* is heard in every man's mouth.—Is there not something within us that responds to all this? And what can that be, but a sense of the evil pressing upon us from every direction, and forcing us to hail with interest, every promise of relief? Revelation comes to supply this special need of deliverance, explaining to us its *modus*, *evidences*, and *results*. Would that it were listened to! We should then learn the cause of our distress, and receive the most ample instructions for our deliverance. But, alas! we are too wise for this. We cry out, let there be a reform! a regenera-

tion! a reorganization! and then go to work at the wrong place, and in the wrong way. Art, science, religion, the family, the state, the church, everything and everybody must be *reformed* and *purified*. We must have a law against this, and a law against that. A stream of bitter and poisoned water rolls its tide of death along, and we must bail it out. We rush in with our *law-buckets*, work like men, day and night, and empty the stream—nearly. What then? Why, the same fountains of bitter poison fill it up again, and we are fools for our pains.

Revelation sets before us the only true reformer, Jesus Christ. His plan is, to correct the fountains, for the purification of the fatal stream of human conduct. His reformation begins in the heart; in each man's own heart; and effecting such a thorough conversion, that he may be regarded as "*a new creature*;" the natural enmity to God and virtue having been subdued, and in its place, love for God, and love for man; a love that "worketh no ill to his neighbor."

The time of life most appropriate to this great reformation, is youth. "Remember *now*, thy Creator, in the days of thy youth." To which corresponds that prime precept of our Savior, "Seek *first* the kingdom of God."

Here, precisely here, is our point. Youth is the time for this reformation, this great change; and, it is so, at least in great part, because youth is the season for education; and unless this great change precede, what is education but the development of the worst principle in all nature, *enmity to God*. The skilful training of a slave of the devil, for a more efficient service of his malignant master, is far from being a promising work! Shall a *hater* be supplied with a light and a sword; a brilliant light and a keen sword, to be sent out among the objects of *his* malice, but of *our* love, involved in darkness, and without defence? Shall a young tiger come here to have this superior faculty teach him how to strengthen his mighty muscles, and use his cruel claws and teeth with more murderous skill? The education of the natural man, is like the

handling of wrong premises in a skilful argument—the better the logic, the worse the conclusion.

Gentlemen, I take a serious view of this subject. Too serious, perhaps, for this pleasant hour, and festive occasion.—Pardon me. The sun of my life has passed its zenith, and is declining fast toward the shades of evening, and the night of death; and I feel as I have never before felt, the vital and eternal importance of understanding, in early life, our nature, our circumstances, and our destiny. When, at that period, I arrived at that awful fork of the road of life, pausing to determine which prong I would prefer, Revelation decided my choice. But, I may well tremble on thinking of the risk I ran. Now, I look toward the close of life with hope, sometimes with confidence. But, had I made the fatal mistake that some here, perhaps, have made, and others here, perhaps, are about to make, by this time I should have been confirmed in sin; a fountain of mischief and death to my family and acquaintance, and nearly ready to stumble into a hopeless eternity. It becomes me, then, I think—having made such a narrow escape—to be serious, especially when occupied with such a subject as the one in hand.

My object has been, to point out the premises, essential to a proper education, to show that the regeneration of the heart is the indispensable preparation for the instructions of this justly honored Faculty; for the part of true citizens in this greatest nation of the earth; for every position, relation, duty, true honor, and true happiness in this life, and for the stupendous mysteries of eternity.

I am, myself, a father; and when I hear that Divine Father of us all, saying to that young man approaching this sacred institution, “My son, give me thy heart!” I understand the tenderness and wisdom of the gracious appeal, to an extent that compels me to add, “Do it, my young brother, do it. Do it as the first, the paramount duty of thy life!”

“Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the ungodly, *nor* standeth in the way of sinners; *nor* sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” That is, who *denies himself*; puts

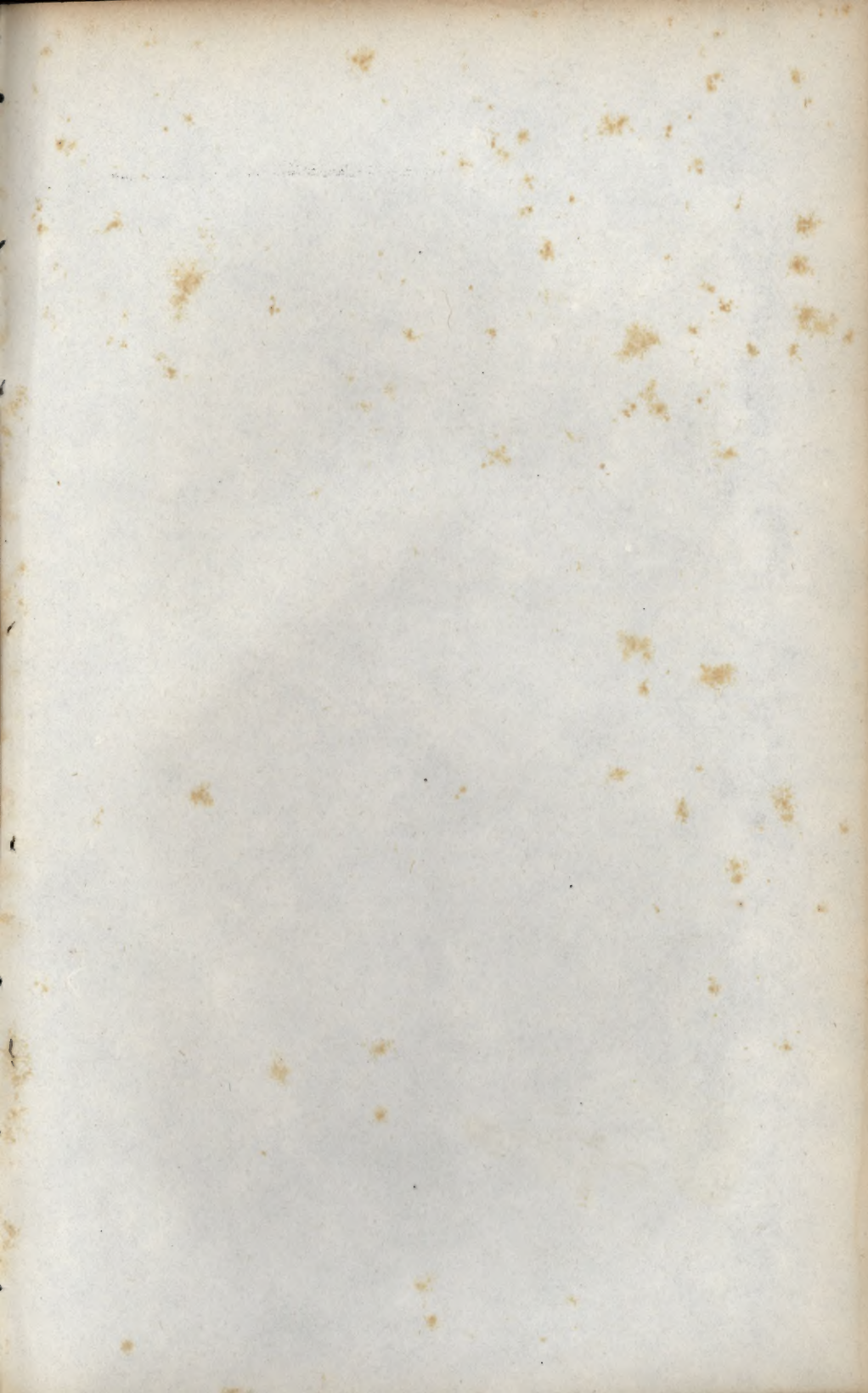
a firm and determined *negative* upon his corrupt nature, opposing, checking, defeating its development.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—Ps. 1.

Yes, with this moral change of condition premised, the path of increasing and endless prosperity opens before him. This able Faculty will, then, have everything to encourage the appliance of its well known resources and skill. And when its graduate shall take grateful leave, bearing the green palm of Collegiate success, it shall rejoice over him, and bless him, and have no surprise to mingle with its delight, upon the anticipated tidings of his usefulness and honors, in the pure and dignified sphere for which it had prepared him.

Gentlemen, be pleased to accept my best wishes, and fervent prayers, for your present and eternal happiness.









1853
Sent
June 11
1018 (other side) USE

Thos. H. Walker, Esquire.

Cottoville, Tenn.